



If you are using Adobe Reader in Windows to view this document, the image above and the other images in this pdf document can be viewed in greater detail by clicking on View then Zoom then Marquee Zoom. The flowers in the image are various garden hellebores, *Helleborus multifidus*, *H. foetidus* and *Iris lazica*.

Jim McKenney, Editor jimmckenney@jimmckenney.com
<http://www.pvcnargs.org/>

You can pay your dues by sending your check for \$15 to Margot Ellis, 2417 N Taylor St., Arlington, VA 22207 4pvctreas@gmail.com

Calendar 2013

Most meetings are Saturday mornings- 9:30am coffee; 10am presentation, unless otherwise noted.

Coffee/Tea and donuts will be provided at meetings

March 30, McLean Community Center, McLean, VA Mike SzeSze, “Knowing and Growing Carnivorous and Bog Plants” <http://www.carnivorousplantnursery.com/>

April: Field Trip, Leonard J.Buck Rock Garden, Far Hills, NJ Friday April 19th AND Sat April 20th, both at

1 P.M. so members can pick one. This is a carpool trip. Details to follow. .
 Address: 11 Layton Rd., Far Hills, NJ 07931
 (908) 234-2677
<http://www.somersetcountyparks.org/parksfacilities/buck/LJBuck.html>

April 26-27th, Plant Sale, US National Arboretum, Washington, DC

May 2-5, NARGS Annual Meeting, Asheville, NC. "Exploring the Flora of the Blue Ridge"<http://www.nargs2013.org/index.php> Registration is open!

May 18 Plant Sale, Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria, VA

May 25 Spring Plant Exchange, Lynne Blei's, Potomac, MD

June/July Annual picnic

September 21 Fall Plant Exchange, Kevin & Marla McIntosh's home, Ellicott City, MD

October: October 22, Tuesday evening. NARGS Eastern Speaker, J Ian Young, Scottish plantsman and artist. See his lecture topics here: (bulbs are a specialty). Topic TBD
http://www.nargs.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=252:speakers-tour-2013&catid=62:speakers-tours&Itemid=121

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The deadline for the next issue of this bulletin is April 15, 2013

Chairman's Message

SEED EXCHANGE 2013

The Phase 3 component of the NARGS Seed Exchange as carried out by our Potomac Valley Chapter was really successful thanks to broad volunteer support. We had over thirty volunteers from our chapter membership coupled with three from the Mason-Dixon Chapter plus several non-rock-gardener friends. The upside was that all the volunteers seemed to appreciate what they were doing – it provided an activity during the winter season plus yielded a sense of accomplishment. Most of all was the fun of checking out the over 3,500 different seed genotypes most of which were full species and

correctly named. Many of the species were new to us and challenged us to find out more about

them. So, it also turned out to be a learning experience.

The seed was collected worldwide by NARGS members and was eventually distributed by our chapter to over 22 countries. Initially the raw collected seed was sent to a single location in the U. S. (overseen by Laura Serowicz) from where it was redistributed to seventeen Phase 2 centers around the U.S., mostly according to alphabetical sets of seed. There the seed was more or less evenly packaged into labeled and numbered glassine envelopes (the sorters had to decide based on the available seed how many seed packets of each species to fill). Once this

work was completed at each center a full box was sent to our house from mid-December into early January. Very fortunately we were permitted to use space at the Behnke Nurseries Garden Center in Beltsville, Maryland (THANKS Behnke Nurseries !) which, though not in Northern Virginia, was reasonably accessible to most volunteers. The nursery provided bench space at the back of their tropical greenhouse (not a bad spot to be in the dead of winter) which gave us an ample place to spread out the numbered glassine seed packets in order using over 30 trays. All the orders (over 750) from around the world (some nice stamps) and the U.S. were logged in on paper and on computer before being brought to our work space at the nursery where the volunteers went to work.

The seed orders came in both electronically and by snail mail. U.S. NARGS members had to pay \$15 to order seeds, international members do not have to pay (a perk partially to entice providing international seed for the SeedX) . (This reminds me to note that Margot Ellis, our treasurer, has had to be the accountant for all the various transactions and prepare a final balance sheet for NARGS. This requires a **lot** of extra, unanticipated work. Thanks, Margot !)



The work space at Behnke Nurseries Photo JodyFetzer



Another view D. Hammerschlag

The volunteers went to work filling the orders by matching the order number with the same seed packet number. Seed donors and volunteers got first dibs on the available seed (important because the most desirable seed generally got depleted quickly): they were allowed up to 35 different species/packets. Non-donors were allowed to select twenty-five . Once the orders were filled the seed packets (25 or 35 usually) were placed in mailing envelopes which were addressed and prepared for mailing at the Post Office. Thanks to Barbara, the Post Mistress at the Fulton P.O. ,who handled the load of mailers and customs forms after hours. The Canada and overseas mailers required filled- out Customs forms (thanks, Freddi). All told the filling of orders process took over six weeks to complete amounting to about 15 work days generally from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Volunteers were free to come and go as they had to. The volunteers had to fit their lives to the pre-selected work dates.

Generally I would have to say there was positive feedback about fulfilling the commitment to the second and last year of doing Phase 3 (2014) by PVC. I would say one big thing we learned was that the process of filling large numbers of orders worked best with say 10-12 persons. Thus next year I will push for fewer work dates focusing on weekends using a full quota of volunteers (usually the 10-12) front loaded toward the beginning to knock down the big load of orders as they first come in.

Once again so many thanks to all those who were able to participate. Also, Freddi and I whole heartedly thank the Chapter for providing us with a gift certificate to a fine rock garden nursery (Opus). It surely bears repeating here that a HEAP of appreciation is due Freddi who was at the Behnke Nurseries every day, the whole time and helped ensure the supply of refreshments. This says nothing about the hours spent at home helping log in all the orders and just lending a hand in keeping track of everything. I mean, she didn't sign us up for this; she was just an innocent bystander who just did what she felt was needed.

The last word then is that it is hoped that this experience, challenging as it was, has helped build the Chapter into a stronger unit.

Cheers,
Dick Hammerschlag
Chairperson, PVC

Look Before You Buy

If you are thinking of buying gardening books, read the WIKI on NARGS site before you do. And remember, NARGS gets a percentage of ALL purchases made through the WIKI portal (the beige rectangle on front page of website).

Elizabeth Spar

Plant Sale - May 17 set up; sale May 18, Green Spring Gardens.

It is essential that each member donate at least six to 10 plants to the plant sale. They don't have to be in big pots. Terry Partridge is coordinating; let him know what you are bringing, and how you plan to help cover the day. We also need help to set up the day before. We need at least fifteen people to run the sale. More on this in the next bulletin.

Elizabeth Spar

A Request from the Vice President

Everyone enjoys the coffee, tea, donuts, and bagels at our meetings. Normally, I am able to bring these to our meetings. Unfortunately, I am not always available to attend meetings and I need a back-up Hospitality Committee Member. Is there a Member who would be willing to share these duties with me?

Tricia Goins

Val Lorenz published a book!

Val Lorenz has been a member of PVC for over 10 years - now a published author. Congratulations, Val!

http://www.amazon.com/God-Loves-Are-You-Sure/dp/1481913778/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1361042559&sr=8-1&keywords=neveraskas

Elizabeth Spar

Primroses



Primroses on February 3

J. McKenney



Primroses on March 13

J. McKenney

In early February one of the local grocery stores was selling little pots of blooming primroses at the very enticing price of three for five dollars. A dozen of these came home with me and went into one of the cold frames right away. With the exception of one which dried out overnight, now, a month and a half later, they are as colorful and presentable as they were the day I bought them. These are the primroses long known as *Primula acaulis* (a name which distinguished them from the so-called *Primula polyanthus*); the modern take on the name is *Primula vulgaris*, although they are a hybrid swarm, not a species from nature. The upper image shows them at the beginning of February, the lower image shows them a month and a half later. I think I'm getting my money's worth with these!

Some very fragrant dwarf *Cyclamen persicum* have been blooming for months. The same is true of some *Narcissus tazetta* cultivars: they remain in bloom for week after week in the cold frames. Any of these, if grown in the warmth of

the house, would probably last in bloom only a week or two.

Winter is over now and the garden is beginning to provide plenty of color, but keep the cold frame in mind as the place to prolong the life and bloom of those mid-winter impulse purchases next year.

Love primroses? See the announcement near the end of this bulletin. Editor

Spring Peepers

Downstream a bit and across the creek is a local wetland area known as KenGar. It's close enough that when the peepers start up in late winter all I have to do is open the door to hear them. This year I first heard them on the weekend of March 9/10. Not only were the peepers in their hundreds, maybe thousands, going to town, but so too were the wood frogs and a few chorus frogs. Some years they are much earlier, and that's true too of the first blooms of *Magnolia stellata*: this year, its buds did not begin to show color until last week.

Editor

Iris lazica



J. McKenney

This has been a good year for *Iris lazica*. It is so much like *Iris unguicularis* that I can't tell them apart. In most years *Iris lazica* blooms later than *I. unguicularis*, but not this year. The two were in bloom together early in late February and early March. *Iris lazica* is widely said to be hardier than *I. unguicularis*, although it has not been tried as a garden plant here. It currently resides in a cold frame. The big, blue flowers are a treat at this time of year. Editor

Oxalis adenophylla

Is anyone else growing this plant? It's widely available and inexpensive, but try finding one in a local garden. For a long time I suspected its cold hardiness – but that's not the issue with this plant. It's hardy enough for our climate. I tried it several times, and the ones which survived the winter to bloom were never seen again. What went wrong?

The other day while browsing through some recently acquired issues of an early twentieth century German garden magazine I found this:



Oxalis adenophylla in *Gartenschönheit* May 1928 J. McKenney

The text says : Much too rarely in May in our rock gardens does one encounter large cushions of this Chilean oxalis, *Oxalis adenophylla*. It certainly wants to be completely dry in the winter, otherwise after the first frosts one must dig out the bulbs and overwinter them in sand.

So, are dry winters the answer in our climate? Plants growing at my community garden plots survived last summer and this winter: they are emerging now. But this year I intend to be a lot more careful about water after the plants die down for the year. Editor

Scilla bifolia



J. McKenney

My first encounter with this charming little plant was in fact a big disappointment: I had ordered bulbs of *Chionodoxa sardensis*, and the little squill was sent instead. As the years passed the little squill proved to be such a good garden plant that all was eventually forgiven, and I can now say that I've been happy with this plant for decades. It spreads gently but has never been a problem. It's about as blue as *Chionodoxa sardensis*, but the flowers are smaller.

This squill will hybridize with *Chionodoxa* to produce hybrids: these hybrids have appeared in my garden. They have been given the nothogeneric name \times *Chionoscilla*, although I'm inclined to say that appearances notwithstanding, when two plants cross and produce viable progeny they are better considered as the same species in varied guise and certainly not assigned to different genera.

Editor

The 2013 Annual Show of the American Primrose Society

The 2013 Annual Show of the American Primrose Society will be held at the Tower Hill Botanical Garden in Boylston, Massachusetts, on MAY 4th and 5th.

This spring the New England Chapter will host an enjoyable weekend of primrose-filled fun for members, guests, and the public in one of the most delightful settings in New

Eminent horticulturist and photographer Merrill Jensen will be the guest speaker with two presentations entitled "The Primula National Collection: How We Got There" and the

"The History of the Jensen-Olson Arboretum: from Gold Miners to Primula Growers." As Horticulturist and Manager of the Jensen-Olson Arboretum in Juneau, Alaska, Mr. Jensen has built up a National Collection of Primula that contains the most species under cultivation in the US. Mr. Jensen will also host the Round Table Primula discussion on Sunday morning.

The exhibition will be held in the long, sunny main corridor. Set up will begin on Friday afternoon, May 3rd, and continue early on Saturday morning until the exhibit hall is closed during judging.

If you have one, or more primroses, in peak condition, pot them up and bring them to exhibit! Arrive during the setup period and someone will be available to help you bench your plants. You must have had the plants for at least six-months. Make sure they are watered and in clean pots, and remove dead flowers and leaves so that they will be looking their best. If you have never entered a primrose show before, you will be eligible for the Novice Award.

On Friday evening a Garden Party and dinner will be held at Matt Mattus and Joe Phillip's home. A luncheon meeting is scheduled for noon at Tower Hill's Farmhouse on Saturday, and the conference banquet will be at O'Connor's Pub, Boylston, 6 PM on Saturday. Look for information in your registration materials, online, and at the Welcome Table.

Friendly faces will greet you at the Welcome Table at the entrance to the exhibition hall. Here you will find helpful advice, books and seeds to buy, and information on all conference events, including the self-drive tour of gardens and nurseries to visit in the area.

Beyond the Exhibition Hall of exquisite primroses, will be found the sales area, where a wide assortment of hard to find and garden primroses, as well as other garden treasures, will be offered by specialty plant nurseries from around New England.

The Primrose Show will be held concurrently with the American Daffodil Society Show, so be prepared to marvel at their exhibits as well.

It is always a great pleasure to spend time in the Tower Hill gardens and buildings as every year the gardens offer more in the way of innovative design and practical ideas.

The Orangerie and Limonaia are particularly nice if the day is chilly, and a new garden called “A Garden Within Reach” and a bog garden are being installed. Located at 11 French Drive, Boylston, MA, Tower Hill is fully accessible, and wheelchairs are available by request.

Twigs Café (open 11am-3pm), offers good food, drinks, and spectacular desserts, either inside or from a terraced dining area with a pleasant view of Mount Wachusett and the reservoir, which is a splendid place to relax, chat with friends and rest up for another perusal of the exhibition tables.

Registration forms and events schedules, information on exhibiting plants, and judging rules can all be found on the APS website www.americanprimrosesociety.org.

Information on Tower Hill Botanical Garden may be found at www.towerhillbg.org, or by calling 508-869-6111.

Our March 2013 Meeting “Carnivorous (and some non-carnivorous) Plants for the Bog Garden ”

with Mike SzeSze, owner, Carnivorous Plant Nursery, *Derwood*, MD

When: Saturday, March 30

9:30 A.M. coffee, 10 A.M. lecture

Where: McLean Community Center
1234 Ingleside Ave. McLean, VA 22101

Note: You can park at the library next door if parking is tight! The library is down Ingleside towards Rt. 123/ Dolly Madison. Take first right onto Oak Ridge Ave, it's right there.

Discover the fascinating world of carnivorous plants you can grow in a bog garden, near a pond's edge, or in containers. Mike's talk will include a discussion of the many different types of carnivorous plants – sundews, Venus flytraps, pitcher plants, as well as a few non- carnivorous bog plants -- their habitats and ecology, and easy steps for growing them at home.

Michael Szesze is retired science teacher who won many awards during his 32-year career. His accolades include the Maryland Science Teacher-of-the-Year, the Maryland Alternate to the NASA Teacher-In-Space Project, and the National Science Foundation VIP-Outstanding Physics Teacher. Michael's love and enthusiasm for science have inspired thousands of students and teachers alike in his classes, workshops, conference presentations and seminars. He has been raising carnivorous plants since childhood. An accomplished photographer, Mike has documented many of the plants he loves as seen on his website: <http://www.carnivorousplantnursery.com>



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